

The SAILING OF KING OLAF

AND OTHER POEMS
BY

Alice Williams Brotherton.



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*The Sailing
of King Olaf*

AND OTHER POEMS

By ALICE WILLIAMS BROTHERTON



CHICAGO
CHARLES H. KERR & COMPANY
1887

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To
MY MOTHER
TO WHOSE INSPIRATION AND TRAINING ALL THAT IS BEST
IN THESE PAGES IS DUE; THIS BOOK IS
LOVINGLY INSCRIBED



*What is your art, O poet?
Only to catch and to hold
In a poor, frail word-mould
A little of life;
That the soul to whom you show it
May say: "With truth it is rife,
This poem—I lived it of old."*

*Ah, the light wherein we read
Must be the light of the past,
Or your poem is nothing at best
But an empty rhyme.
And to summon back grief what need
Of word of yours?—through all time
It abides with us to the last.*

*Sing to us of joy, then. Borrow
Of life its happiest hours.
Sing of love and hope, of flowers,
Of laughter and smiles;
But not too oft of sorrow!—
The song that our grief beguiles
Is the best, in this world of ours.*

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THE SAILING OF KING OLAF

THE SAILING OF KING OLAF

“NORROWAY hills are grand to see,
Narroway vales are broad and fair;
Any monarch on earth might be
Contented to find his kingdom there.”
So spake Harald Haardrade bold,
To Olaf his brother with beard red-gold.

“A bargain!” cried Olaf, “Beside the strand
Our ships rock idle. Come, sail away!
Who first shall win to our native land
He shall be king of old Narroway.”
Quoth Harald the Stern, “My vessel for thine,
I will not trust to this laggard of mine.”

“Take thou my Dragon with silken sails,”
Said Olaf, “The Ox shall be mine in place.
If it pleases our Lord to send me gales,
In either vessel I'll win the race.
With this exchange art satisfied?”
“Ay, brother!” the crafty one replied.

King Olaf strode to the church to pray
For blessing of God on crew and ship;
But Harald, the traitor, made haste to weigh
His anchor, and out of the harbor slip.
“Pray!” laughed Harald Haardrade, “Pray!”
The wind’s in my favor. Set sail! Away!”

As Olaf knelt by the chancel rail,
Down the broad aisle came one in haste,
With panting bosom and cheek all pale;
Straight to King Olaf’s side he paced:
“Oh, waste no time in praying,” cried he,
“For Harald already is far at sea!”

But Olaf answered: “Let sail who will,
Without God’s blessing I shall not go.”
Beside the altar he tarried still,
While the good priest chanted soft and slow;
And Olaf prayed the Lord in his heart:
“I shall win yet if Thou take my part!”

Cheerily then he leaped on board;
High on the prow he took his stand,
“Forward,” he bade, “in the name of the Lord!”
Held the white horn of the Ox in his hand:
“Now Ox! good Ox! I pray thee speed
As if to pasture in clover-mead!”

The huge Ox rolled from side to side,
And merrily out of the harbor sped.

“Dost see the Dragon?” King Olaf cried
To one who clung to the high mast-head,
“Not so!” the watcher swift answer gave,
“There is never a boat upon the wave.”

Onward then for a league and twain,
Right in the teeth of the wind they flew:
“Seest aught of the Dragon upon the main?”
“Something to landward sure I view!
Far ahead I can just behold
Silken sails with a border of gold.”

“The third time Olaf called with a frown.
“Dost see my Dragon yet? Ho! Say!”
Out of the mast-head the cry came down:
“Nigh to the shores of Norroway
The good ship Dragon rides full sail,
Driving ahead before the gale!”

“Ho! to the haven!” King Olaf cried,
And smote the eye of the Ox with his hand.
It leaped so madly along the tide
That never a sailor on deck could stand;
But Olaf lashed them firm and fast
With trusty cords to the strong pine mast.

“Now who,” the helmsman said, “will guide
The vessel upon this tossing sea?”
“That will I do!” King Olaf cried;
“And no man’s life shall be lost through me.”
Like a living coal his dark eye glowed,
As swift to the helmsman’s place he strode.

Looking neither to left nor right,
Toward the land he sailed right in,
Steering straight as a line of light:
“So must I run if I would win;
Faith is stronger than hills or rocks,
Over the land speed on, good Ox!”

Into the valleys the waters rolled;
Hillocks and meadows disappeared.
Grasping the helm in his iron hold
On, right onward, St. Olaf steered;
High and higher the blue waves rose.
“On!” he shouted, “No time to lose!”

Out came running the elves in a throng,
Out from cavern and rock they came:
“Now, who is this comes sailing along
Over our homes? Ho! tell us thy name?”
“I am St. Olaf, my little men,
Turn into stones till I come again.”

The elf-stones rolled down the mountain-side;

The sturdy Ox sailed over them all.

“ Ill luck be with thee!” a carline cried,

“ Thy ship has shattered my chamber wall!”

In Olaf’s eyes flashed a fiery glint:

“ Be turned forever to rock of flint!”

Never was sailing like this before:

He shot an arrow along the wind;

Or ever it lighted the ship sailed o’er

The mark: the arrow fell far behind.

“ Faster, faster!” cried Olaf, “ Skip

Fleet as Skidbladnir, the magic ship!”

Swifter and swifter across the foam

The quivering Ox leaped over the track,

Till Olaf came to his boyhood’s home;

Then fast as it rose the tide fell back.

And Olaf was king of the whole Norse land

When Harald the third day reached the strand.

Such was the sailing of Olaf the king,

Monarch and Saint of Norway;

In view of whose wondrous prospering

The Norse have a saying unto this day:

“ As Harald Haardrade found to his cost,

Time spent in praying is never lost!”

PASSING

“WHAT ship is this comes sailing
 Across the harbor bar,
So strange yet half familiar,
 With treasure from afar?
O comrades shout, good bells ring out,
 Peal loud your merry din!
O joy! At last across the bay
 My ship comes sailing in.”
 Men said, in low whispers,
 “It is the passing bell.
At last his toil is ended.”
 They prayed, “God rest him well.”

“Ho Captain, my Captain,
 What store have you on board? ”

“A treasure far richer
 Than gems or golden hoard.—
The broken promise welded firm,
 The long forgotten kiss,
The love more worth than all on earth,
 All joys life seemed to miss!”
 The watchers sighed softly;
 “It is the death-change!
What vision blest has given
 That rapture deep and strange?”

“O Captain, dear Captain,
What are the forms I see
On deck there beside you?
They smile and beckon me;
And soft voices call me,
Those voices sure I know!”

“All friends are here that you held dear
In the sweet long ago.”
“The death smile,” they murmured,
“It is so passing sweet,
We scarce have heart to hide it
Beneath the winding-sheet.”

“O Captain, I know you!
Are you not Christ the Lord?
With light heart and joyous
I hasten now on board.
Set sail, set sail, before the gale,
Our trip will soon be o'er;
To-night we'll cast our anchor fast
Beside the heavenly shore!”
Men sighed: “Lay him gently
Beneath the heavy sod.”
The soul afar beyond the bar
Went sailing on to God.”

UNAWARES

A song welled up in the singer's heart,
(Like a song in the throat of a bird,)
And loud he sang, and far it rang,—
For his heart was strangely stirred;
And he sang for the very joy of song,
With no thought of one who heard.

Within the listener's wayward soul
A heavenly patience grew.
He fared on his way with a benison
On the singer, who never knew
How the careless song of an idle hour
Had shaped a life anew.

WAKE-ROBIN

[RONDEL]

WAKE-ROBIN 's peeping from the mould,

“ Hey, Robin, Robin, wake!

Vanished is the white snow-flake,
Loosed is winter's icy hold;

Spring is coming o'er the wold,

Be merry for her sake!

Wake-robin 's peeping from the mould,

“ Hey Robin, Robin, wake! ”

Daffodil in gown o' gold

Hastes the tender sod to break,

Dandelions a carpet make

Under her dancing feet unrolled;

Wake-robin 's peeping from the mould.

Hey, Robin! Robin, wake!

NOVEMBER

[RONDEL]

Is this the world that was so young
And fresh and fair but yesterday?
To his fond mate a roundelay
From leafy boughs the robin sung,
Wild bees upon the clover swung,
And grove and field with bloom were gay.
Is *this* the world that was so young
And fresh and fair but yesterday?

Sere leaves beneath our feet are flung,
Bare boughs against a sky of grey,
Hither and thither, sobbing, sway,
As if wild hands a spectre wrung.
Is this the world that was so young
And fresh and fair but yesterday?

(22)

THE RAGGED REGIMENT

I LOVE the ragged veterans of June,
Not your trim troop drill-marshalled for display
In gardens fine,—but such as dare the noon
With saucy faces by the public way.

Moth-mullein, with its moth-wing petals white,
Round Dandelion, and flaunting Bouncing-Bet,
The golden Butter-and-Eggs, and Ox-eye bright,
Wild Parsley, and tall Milkweed bee-beset.

Ha, sturdy tramps of Nature, mustered out
From garden service, scorned and set apart,—
There's not one member of your ragged rout
But wakes a warmth of welcome in my heart.

THE FROST MYTH

Out of Frost and Fire sprang Ymir,
Type of Chaos, long ago;
Mighty Odin slew the giant,
As the Norsemen know.

From the rushing blood the ocean
In swift thunderous torrents whirled;
From the ponderous carcass Odin
Carved the Mitgard world,—

Of his hair made waving forests,
Of his skull the vaulted sky,
Moulded from his bones the mountains
Which around us lie.

Lo, to-day, upon my window
Odin carves on every pane,
(To rebuke my skeptic smiling),
A new world again.

Mountain, forest, plain and river,
Flash upon my raptured sight;
Here is Summer's perfect joyance,
And Spring's dear delight.

Ferny cliff, cascade and grotto,
Glitter on the frosty pane—
Miracle the Norsemen chanted
Here is wrought again.

Who shall say the gods have left us,
Or that Odin's power is lost,
When new Mitgards rise before us
Out of Fire and Frost?

APPLES OF SODOM

THE golden apples dance on the bough,
Yellow and mellow; a rosy flush
On the side o' the sun, betraying how
The pulp within is ripened and lush
With the juice of a summer's garnering. Fair
To the eyes they hang, as the fabled fruit
Of the tree in the famed Hesperides, where
A dragon coils at the root.

No dragon here, with its beryl eyes
And tongue of flame! It is but to pass
A step or two from the path which lies
So bleak, and tread o'er the yielding grass,
Crushing the buds as one goes; to clutch
Yon bough, an easy reach as you stand,
And straight, with never a tug or a touch
The fruit lies there in the hand.

Sin? But the trespass is so slight—
So small, indeed, I could almost hold
It not to be. Just mark how the light
Touches that topmost cluster with gold,—

Feast for a god! to set the teeth
In the mottled skin, and to crush through where
The luscious pulpiness melts beneath—
Hist! Did a voice cry “ Beware ”?

Bah! what folly, to gaze and long,
With lips that water and wistful eyes.
Coward! to linger and prate of wrong.
Forward a stride and you reach the prize.
So! And the fruit for which you pined
Lies in the hand, and bite you must.
The teeth tear into the rind—to find
The core but ashes and dust!

Fool! to be fooled by the fair outside.
Curse, if you will; it is all too late—
Fit reward of folly and pride.
This is the end of it all, then. Wait.
Turn it over. The nether half
Was flecked and specked with splotches of rot.
Ah, *now* that lurking fiend’s harsh laugh
Is hard to bear; is it not?

Hard; but it galls not half so sore
As your own contempt. You have had your
will,

Taken your fate in your hand as you swore.
Of the fruit forbidden now eat your fill,
For none will hinder you. Ah, you see
Clearer now than before your fall
That sin *is* sin, and must ever be,
Though it were never so small.

Go! you have learned your lesson, and so
Back to the path, with the ash on your lip.
Something of wile and of guile you know,
To guard your feet lest again they slip.
Beautiful gilded deceit! Ay, such
You'll find, in its every guise, is sin;
Fair to the eye and warm to the touch,
But ashes and dust within.

A STUDY FROM THE RING

TINSEL and glare,
Brazen speech, and bolder stare
From bleary eyes.—

Bah, what do I care?
Give me the rush, and the music's crash,
The roar as into the ring I dash—
Houپ la!

Just last night, out there in the ring,
They played a tune that I used to sing

Out on the farm,
An' I saw—my father, with locks of grey
And folded hands, as he used to pray
“Keep us from harm!”—

Saw him as plain as you see me.

Sort o' shaky?—Queer? D. T.?
Mebbe so, who cares? Ha, you see,
A good while now I've been going the pace,
It must be near the end of the race.
But—*Houپ la!* Here we are again!

Stand back, men,
Now for a run—
Ha, that “mount” was pretty well done.

Some day—a shriek, a sudden pause,
A huddled heap of silk and gauze,
A limp, crushed form borne out o' the ring
That the bearers glance from shuddering;
While: “Just a slight accident—as you saw.
Now, Mr. Merryman, next!”

“Hurrah!”

A short life now and a merry one,
And the potter's field to bury one.

Houph la!

Hark there! Hear'em whistle and call?
(What if—*to-night—I should fall!*)
Gi' me the rein, Jake. Stand aside.

(That tune, my God—*to-night?*)
Steady now. Fling the curtains wide.

All r-right!

Room there—Room for the Queen of the Ring
In her Grand Aerial Flying Spring—

Houph la!

THE CARDINAL'S SARABAND

Temp. LOUIS XIII.

THE air was faint with the rich perfume
That Anne of Austria loved to wear,
As the Queen swept hastily down the room
Crushing a *billet*, with haughty stare:

“See, Chevreuse, you are always right!

The Cardinal loves. Here under my hand
Are the lines that proclaim him my faithful
knight.

He—the wretch! My “slave to command.”

“Insult! This to the Queen?” The ire
Of the haughty Spaniard flamed in her eyes.
“The king shall know—” “Madame, you desire
Revenge?” cried her lady, “At hand it lies.”
A whispered conference; eyes alight
With mirth and malice; and then: “Command
Here in the palace, this very night,
In jester’s costume—a saraband!”

Twilight in the Louvre. “ But will he come,
Think you, Chevreuse?” “ Hist, Madame,
Look!”

Parting the tapestry of the room
A swift form enters, and drops its cloak:
A lithe slim figure advances, dressed
In the fool’s garb, tawny and red, with all
The bells a-tinkle. Gods, what a jest!
Can this be the mighty Cardinal?

Perfect. The coxcomb, the motley hose,
Rosettes of scarlet on either foot!
“ Boccau, the music!” The figure bows
As a dance tune tinkles out of the lute,
Bows and poses, then lightly whirls,
Like a dancing dervise of the Eastern land;
The castanets clash as the white hand twirls—
The Cardinal dances a saraband.

Bravo, Richelieu! *Ciel*, what a grace!
Who would have thought a shape so trim
Could hide in a Cardinal’s gown? The face
For all, I fancy, looks somewhat grim.
A smile?—that’s well. Ah, a lighter bound,
A gayer tune! And the air is fanned
Into motion swift, by the merry round
Of the Cardinal dancing the saraband.

Come, my lord, you are not the first
Who has played the fool for a woman's whim;
And tawny and scarlet are not the worst
Of colors to set off a shapely limb!
Quicken the measure.—Ha?—that sound!
A titter behind the tall screen there
In the corner! The dancer stops in his round,
Conscious, at once, of the skillful snare.

Richelieu—Minister, *statesman*, priest,
Mock for a parcel of wanton dames!
Jest of the Court gallants—Ay, for the least
Of their flippant pages! The cold eye flames.
With a curse on lips that are chafed to blood,
And a countenance working with impotent
rage,
The dancer flies from the room, pursued
By shrieks of laughter and badinage.

Eh, how the churchman fumed! *Ma foi*,
But that face was a study! Silence, all.
No word to the king of the great *éclat*
Of the late *début* in his royal hall.
Louis lacks humor, and might not look
On our scheme with favor. Ha, ha, the Fool!
The sight was a rare one—a Cardinal-Duke
Pointing his toes in a gay *pas seul*!

Yes—but he who laughs last laughs best:
A proverb 'twere prudent to understand.
Eh, by my faith 'twas a merry jest—
The churchman dancing a saraband!
But—when the plotting, early and late,
Of an enemy wily and dark and stern,
Turned the love of your friends to hate,
Met and foiled you at every turn:

Set you 'round with his treacherous spies,
Discovered each secret you thought to hide;
Turned the weak Louis' suspicious eyes
On all your actions and galled your pride:
When exiled Chevreuse, in sore disgrace,
Fled for her life from her native land:—
Did you think, my Queen, 'twas a costly price
You paid for a single saraband?

DOROTHY VERNON'S FLIGHT

THERE was dancing and revelry and feasting,
On yonder night in stately Haddon Hall,
For the gentles, who had trooped to the bridal
From every side, made merry at the ball;
The blaring horns and fiddles shrill were going,
And the jests rose high above them all.

And no smile was merrier or brighter,
No laugh rippled blither on the air,
Than that of the blooming little maiden,
Fair Dorothy, so gaily dancing there.
And her sire forgot to frown, laughing lightly:
“So, girl, you have ceased my will to dare!”

The prim stepmother, smiling grimly,
Told herself how the plotting had been wise
That kept the wild cadet of yonder castle
From bearing off so beautiful a prize:
“Since after all it cost,” quoth my lady,
“Only tears and a dozen paltry sighs.”

The bride cried: "Methought you had been
rueing

Your lost love John Manners; and so soon
Have you quite, Doll, forgot his fervent wooing?"

But she whirled away, swinging to the tune
Of "The wind that shakes the Barley," further
parley

Lost and drowned in the blare of the bassoon.

And no step was lighter or was freer
Than Dorothy's, upon that merry night;
The roses in her cheek glowed like fire,
Her eyes mocked the jewels with their light.
The smile about her mouth, coming, going,
Made each face the brighter for the sight.

The dance-notes were ringing blithe and joyous,
The light forms swinging down the floor,
And the wax-lights a brighter sheen were flinging
Over merriment that grew from more to more;
Till none could hear, across the noisy revel,
The opening and shutting of a door.

A foot paused a moment on the threshold,
A face shone an instant in the stream
Of light, ere the portal, softly closing,
Shut in again the taper's yellow gleam;

A cloaked and hooded form across the terrace
Sped silent as a figure in a dream.

A shimmer of white damask in the moonlight,
A hurried backward glance of alarm,
And the maiden gains the shadow of the yew-trees
 And the shelter of her lover's clasping arm,—
There was low laugh that trembled into weeping,
 And the light touch of kisses soft and warm.

And light the sturdy knight swung the lady
 To the saddle of the ready-waiting bay,—
One glance at lighted hall and dusky forest,
 Then foot in the stirrup and away!
In the white moon-light across the moorland
 Riding on till the dawning of the day.

The mad merry measure of the music
 Sounded on, and the revel gaily sped—
Or ever grim Sir George and his lady
 Had learned that their prisoner had fled,
With priest, and ring, and book, upon the morrow
 John Manners and fair Dorothy were wed.

MALISON

THIRTEENTH CENTURY

WHAT doth make my lord so pale?
Why in his sleep doth he moan and wail?
Surely a lord so fair and fine
Should sleep on roses and live on wine.

Down in the long dank marshy grass
The Zingaro cowered to see him pass.
The face was dark but the eyes were bright,
And the steed swayed sharply at the sight.

“Dog of a gipsy!” my lord he said,
And his brand gleamed bright above his head,
One moment flashed in the moon-lit air,
And the gipsy’s form lay weltering there.

The gipsy lifted a look of hate;
“Let me speak the curse or it be too late.”
He made in the air a mystic sign;
“You are rich and handsome, master mine.

“Backward your luck this hour I read.
Ay, cross yourself, you have bitter need,
Wild with unrest your days shall be,
And still in your sleep you shall come to me !”

What doth make my lord so pale?
Why in his sleep doth he moan and wail?
Surely so fair and fine a lord
May laugh to scorn a gipsy's word!

Nothing but crosses sore he hath
Who dares to rouse the gipsy's wrath.
But the fiends in hell they fare not worse
Than he who carries the gipsy's curse.

THE WIFE OF PYGMALION

Now Pygmalion, the statuary of Cyprus, became enamored of a beautiful statue of ivory and gold which he had made, and at his earnest prayer Venus changed this statue into a woman, whom the artist married, and by whom he had a son called Paphus, who founded the city of that name in Cyprus. Ovid, Met. 10: 9.

WHAT is it that you ask of me,
My lord and master, whose skilled hand
Called from the burnished ivory
This fairest shape in all the land?
Ah me, you miss—Alas! alas!
Something that never was.

Am I not fair as when the flame
Of life, Jove-sent, thrilled first each limb?
Each curve and dimple is the same.
Is my cheek paler? Mine eye dim?
You gave me grace and form—the whole.
Could you not give—a soul?

Ah no. Souls come of suffering,
Of midnight anguish, pain and tears,
Of bitter agonies that wring
The heart; of wrong that burns and sears.
I—what have I to do with these,
Shut up in soulless ease?

One time I thought a soul began
To stir within me, when I felt
The warm breath of our baby fan
My breast; and you beside me knelt
With that new rapture in your eyes,
And a great glad surprise!

And once, too, when your rapt eyes burned
With such fire of creative art,
To share your thought I dumbly yearned;
So wild an anguish rent my heart—
Almost, I thought, the pang and glow
Might be a soul's birth throe!

Oh, pray for me, that I may know
All shades of human suffering,
The very height and depth of woe,—
If so the grief and pain might bring
Into this perfect form of mine
At last—the Soul divine!

THE SAGA OF THE QUERN-STONES

KING Frodē from Sweden

Two giant maidens brought;

With many a shining gulden

From King Fjolnir bought;

For in all the realm of Gotland

No hand was to be found

To grasp the huge quern-handle

And turn the mill-stones round,—

The wonderful grey quern-stones,

Of his treasures best by far,

Once wrested from the giants

By his great ancestor Thor;

Now whoso turned them roundabout

Could grind good luck or ill,

Gold and jewels, joy and plenty,

Could summon at his will.

“Grind, grind for me!” cried Frodē,

“Beneath your mighty hold

These magical grey quern-stones

Shall grind me gems and gold.”

Then Menja and Fenja
They stood up at the quern,
And slowly, so slowly,
The stones began to turn,

Then swifter, and swifter,
Until through all the land
The gold and silver money
Was plentiful as sand.

“ We grind good luck to Gotland,
Rich harvest-fields of grain;
No vessel sails from harbor
That comes not back again.”

“ Grind, grind for me!” cried Frodë,
“ Grind love and joy and peace,
Till Gotland is the richest realm,
Your grinding shall not cease!”

“ There is no beggar in the land,
Each peasant has his hoard,
And nowhere in the kingdom
Does the warrior draw his sword.

“ Now give us rest, O Frodë!”
“ Then rest ye,” said the king,
“ But only while the cuckoo’s note
Is silent in the spring.”

“O never in the springtime
Does the cuckoo’s calling cease,
So bid us somewhat longer
From labor find release.”

“Then rest ye while a verse
Of my minstrel’s song is sung.”—
Upon the handle of the quern
The sinewy hands are flung.

“We grind good luck to Gotland;
To Frodë quiet sleep;
Be heard no sound of wrangling,
No eye be seen to weep!

“Now give us rest, O Frodë;
Have you not had your fill?”

“Rest only while a verse is sung,
Or the cuckoo’s note is still.”

“Black are the skies above us,
The cold winds beat our breast,
The frost is keen and biting;
O Frodë, give us rest!” * * *

“Revenge! Revenge, O Menja!
We are of giant’s blood.
Grind, grind, O sister, swiftly—
Bring ruin, fire, and flood!

A ship comes sailing, sailing,
With valiant warriors manned;
We grind them near and nearer.
Say, Frodë, shall they land?"

"A ship comes sailing, sailing!
To Gotland hastening.
Awake, awake, O Frodë,
Or be no more a king!
'Tis Mysingr the viking;
Thee sleeping shall he find?
* * * Grind faster, grind harder,—
To Frodë death we grind!"

The quern-stones and the giant maids
The vikings bear on board,
With Frodë's crown and jewels,
And all his shining hoard.

"Of golden store we need no more;
But here no salt we find:
Ho Menja! Ho Fenja!
Grind salt, weird sisters, grind!"

"From noon of day till noon of night
We labor at the quern!
Ho, viking, hast thou salt enough?"
But still he bade them turn.

“The ship is filled with salt, O king,
So well thy slaves have ground!”
Beneath the weight the vessel sinks,
And all the host are drowned.

“Grind, Menja! Grind, Fenja!
The quern-stones shall not halt
Till all the waters of the sea
Are filled with shining salt!”
Unto this day the quern-stones whi...
And still the salt out-pours,
And where they sank off Norway’s coast
The Maelstrom seethes and roars!

MOLY

WHERE is that healing plant the ancients fable?
Moly they named it; all the flower was white,
And the root black; and the clear juice was able
To heal all wounds, to put all ills to flight.

It blooms about us still. Yet does it borrow
Beauty and grace from no mere earthly sod.
Deep in the soul, from the black root of sorrow,
Grows the white perfect flower of *Trust in God.*

HOLY POVERTY

“La Povertà, la madre di tutti le arti.”

O POVERTY, the mother of all arts,
No dreamer of vain visions is the son
Nurtured by thee! Only the duty done
Thou dost accept; bidding him in the marts
To stand and strive among the foremost. Hearts
Grow strong by striving. Laurels are not won
Save by long steady effort. Who would run
Must bate no jot the pace wherewith he starts.

Madonna Mia, holy Poverty!
I lift for kisses lips that late reviled.
Nor will I flout thee more, (Forgive thy child!)
But hand in hand walk with thee to the end,
However bleak the path thou leadest me.
Stern tasker, harshest teacher, *truest friend.*

QUATRAINS

I

THE MAXIM OF APOLLONIUS

BETTER in some mean shrine beside the way
To find a statue of ivory and gold,
Than in a lofty temple to behold
A huge, coarse figure of the common clay.

II

NOW

Has one a tender thought of me?
Speak it (I pray!) O friend, *to-day*.
To-morrow betwixt me and thee
Like a shut door the grave shall be.

III

THE FALLING STAR

SEE where yon star falls headlong, flashing
Across the purple twilight air!—
An Angel bears to earth from heaven
The answer to a mortal's prayer.

IV

ON READING —

LITTLE I love these lines of thine
 Drunk with rhythm as if with wine.
 Wheeling and reeling they recall
 Only the dance of a Bacchanal.

V

A WOMAN'S CHOICE

No laurel—nay! Give me heartsease, I pray.
 Laurel grows on the heights so lone and cold;
 But heartsease clusters by the warm threshold,
 And brightens with its blossoms all the day.

VI

A CHILD'S ANSWER

WHAT makes the buttercup so yellow?
 O, he caught a golden sunbeam in his cup,
 And would not yield it up—
 The saucy fellow!

VII

LARGESS

AH, when a kingly soul doth largess give,
 How far its worth exceeds the gift itself!
 The slightest thing outweighs a miser's pelf
 When round it cluster memories that live.

VIII

A NARROW LIFE

A NARROW life, shut in by petty care,
Has room for duty and for beauty too;
Beauty of faithful serving.—What more fair
Can angels offer to the Master's view?

IX

THE UNWRITTEN MESSAGE

To carry thought how weak
Are words, mere idle signs.
Heart-deeps to heart-deeps speak
Between the lines.

X

FROM SCHILLER

ONLY Life repeats itself forever,
Fantasy immortal youth doth hold.
What in time and space existed never
That, alone, can not grow old.

XI

OF TIRELESS PATIENCE

[*A Persian Fable.*]

BEFORE the close-barred gate of paradise
A poor man watched a thousand years; then dozed
One little instant only, with dulled eyes;
That instant open swung the gate—and closed.

xii

SEPTEMBER

LUSH juices of ripe fruits; splashed color flung
From Frost's first palette—purple, gold and red;
The last sweet song the meadow-lark has sung,
Dirge of the Summer dead.

WHERE'S THE BABY?

OH dear, where is the Baby gone?

I can't tell where I missed him;

Why only last night in his crib

I tucked him safe and kissed him!

This boy, with marbles, top and ball,

In knickerbockers dressed,

This cannot be the baby small

I cradled on my breast.

I want the weenty teeny thing

In dresses soft and white,

That I could cuddle, kiss, and sing

Soft by-lows to at night.

But stay—here are the self-same eyes,

His very dimpled chin,

These are his rosy pouting lips

With milk-white-teeth within.

This *is* my Baby.—But how changed!

I hear his merry shout

As he goes sliding down the stair,

And dancing in and out;

Splashing and dashing through the brook.
With brow and cheek of tan.
Heigho! My baby's gone; instead
I see,—a little man.

Ah well, when evening comes again
With sleep and story-time,
A little white-gowned form will come
Into my lap to climb;
His wee head cradled on my heart
Will still this yearning pain.
O then I'll know that I have found
My baby-boy again!

THE SINGER

A SINGER went singing adown the world,
Now in green meadows and now in the town,
Anon where the smoke of the battle whirled,
Then off where the autumn woods lay brown.

Singing, still singing. Ay, nothing but that.
When the trumpet summoned the hosts to war
And the soldiers rushed at the rat-tat-tat
Of the deafening drum, she stood afar:

And sang of the conflict in ringing tones,
Of the laurel wreath, of the victor's death—
Till the dying silenced their shuddering groans,
And smiled as they drew their final breath.

She sang of duty. Her weak hands failed
As she strove the burden of life to bear;
But through all of the song no sadness wailed
As she sang, still sang, in her white despair.

She sang of love. From her eager hand
Love's brimming chalice was dashed aside.
As her steps drew near to the Unknown Land
She gazed on the past and wistful sighed:

“In all the fray I have struck no blow!

Ah! welladay; but the hours were long:
When evening comes what have I to show
Save here and there the thread of a song?”

But the warriors knew at the conflict’s end,
When the roar of the battle had died away,
That song which seemed with the cannon to blend
Had strengthened each arm in the deadly fray.

And the souls that in duty’s lonely way
With faltering steps had journeyed long,
When the voice of the singer reached them that
day
Felt the hearts within them grow brave and
strong.

And happy lovers, that hand in hand
Wandered together the wide world o’er,
From that song they but vaguely could understand,
Learned a deeper love than they knew before.

UNDER THE BEECHES

In the grey beech shadows
Dewy violets hide,
Anemone and blood-root
Blossom side by side;
And the tall, white trillium
On her slender stem,
Like some pale Court beauty
Bends to them.

In the grey beech shadows
It was years ago
When last I saw the wind-flower
And Spring-beauty blow:
But my heart grows tender
With a yearning wild
For the woods I strayed in
When a child.

Is there any dainty
Tasting half so sweet
As the wild May-apple
That we used to eat?
Any costly jewel
With as rich a glow
As the red rose-heart showed
Long ago?

MIDWINTER

THE sad earth cowers beneath the snow
That wraps her like a shroud,
Around the house the bleak winds go
With wailings shrill and loud.
But soft and low my heart doth sing:
“I know, I know—
After each Winter comes a Spring,
When roses blow!”

What time my soul in sadness lay
Compassed by shadows drear,
When gladness seemed so far away
And grief so near—so near;
Still soft and low my heart would sing:
“I know, I know—
That after sorrow there comes a morrow
With joy aglow.”

CRICKET

CRICKET, you're no summer friend!
When the snows have hid the earth
To the dreary winter's end,
Blithe you sing beside my hearth:
“Chirrup! chirrup!”
Filling all the room with mirth.

Fairer far are butterflies
Blossom-winged and gold-bedight,
But beneath the summer skies
Only, will they bless my sight;
“Chirrup! chirrup!”
You make blithe the winter's night.

Not for flaunting, fair outside,
Will I make my friends my own,
Lest my fortunes they deride.
Cricket clad in dusty brown,
Constant ever
Friends like you will still abide.

THE SNOWDROP

WHEN Eve, outside the gate of Paradise,
Watched the first snowflakes whiten hill and
dell;

Hot blinding tear drops filled her gentle eyes,
With bitter grief her heart began to swell
For the lost flowers of Eden loved so well.

“O my lost buds and flowers,” she sighed, “to
whom

Sweet names I gave, and whom I reared with
care!

In all this wilderness there is no bloom,
But cruel thorns and thistles everywhere
Set thick about the path our feet to tear.

“ My heart goes wearying for you day by day,
Knowing I ne’er shall see you more, alas!
And now the cruel snow will hide away
Even these poor little tender blades of grass
That stoop to kiss my tired feet as I pass.”

An angel swift-descending spake: “ O Eve,
Our Lord hath heard. He leaves not comfort-
less

His erring ones. He bids you cease to grieve;
Your willing hands to patient work address,
And make an Eden of this wilderness.

“Even as repentance cometh after sin,
Softening the heart and healing sin’s dark wound;
So after Winter’s storms shall Spring begin
With gentle showers to soften all the ground
And strew on every side her grasses ’round.

“Root out these thorns and brambles from the
soil,—
As from your hearts the discontent that lies
Therein. And after months of earnest toil
On every side shall blossoms bright arise,
Only less fair than those of Paradise.

“And that ye well may know these things are
true,
I give a sign,” he said. A flake of snow
He caught, and kissed, and lightly earthward
threw;
There, rooted deep, and wavering to and fro,
The flake became *the snowdrop that we know.*

WESTWARD HO

ON BOARD THE FLEET OF COLUMBUS: A SPANISH SAILOR
SPEAKS

Ay! We have *seen* them on the far horizon,
Lying all bright against the Western sky,
These Fortunate Isles! The summer sunbeam
lies on

Their peaks when daylight in our clime goes by.

Still, Westward Ho,
Sailing beyond the sunset let us go!

I do not hold with this new-fangled notion
Of Senor Cristofero, that the world
Is round, not flat. The waters of the ocean
Over the edge would speedily be whirled;
And thus—all dry
Before our eyes the ocean bed would lie.

That's *too* absurd. But ne'ertheless, signori,
He's a brave man and learned, our Admiral.
And, ere six days are gone, you'll see before ye
That fertile country which the Norsemen call
Vinland.—But *I*

Hold just before us those same *Isles* must lie!

When Spain was o'er-run by the Moorish legions,
Did not seven Bishops with an exile band
(Six centuries gone), set sail toward those regions,
To found seven cities in the unknown land,

Where the True Faith
And its adherents should be saved from death?

The Isle of Seven Cities is the nearest
Of these same Isles I speak of. One may see
From the Canaries, when the air is clearest,
Its castled peaks, old mariners agree.
Of all the host
That since have sailed, but two have reached the
coast.

One was a Portuguese, a pilot; steering
South from the warm Canaries, he was caught
In a wild storm of wind and rain, and veering
Westward, chanced on the very land he sought;
Was tempest-tossed,
Half dead with hunger, on the rocky coast,
And walked and talked with men who spoke Cas-
tilian
After *the old style*; saw the Cross raised high
Upon the churches; slept in the pavilion
Of their first General: sailing—suddenly

Once more was tossed
By cyclones till all reckoning was lost.

Yea, often I, myself, have heard the story
Told by my grandsire, of one Don Fernande
Who swore for him alone should be the glory
Of re-discovering this wondrous land.

So he set sail
With a good fleet; and marvelous is the tale
Of his adventures:—how he found the city,
Was hailed Adelantado of the Isle,
And flirted with the Alcayde's daughter pretty;
Served with distinguished pomp and state the
while:

And, on the morn,
In the Alcayde's own barge was shipward borne:

Saw from before his eyes his vessels vanish,
Barge, rowers, Alcayde, disappear! And, far
At sea, himself, was picked up by some Spanish
Or Portuguese; close-clinging to a spar!

To Lisbon straight
They bore him, pitying his wretched state.

Well, hear the end! He finds himself forgotten
By every one, name, rank, and mission,—all!

The very lintels of his hall are rotten.
From brasses on the old Cathedral wall,
 Lo, it appears
His sweet-heart has been dead *one hundred years.*

Some wisepates call these histories a farrago
 Of idle nonsense; say the men were daft,
Crazed by long shipwreck: but by St. Iago
 I hold they were more sane than those who
 laughed
 At them, forsooth,
 Because *their* blear eyes had not seen the truth.

Certain it is *some* land to Westward stretches,
 For I myself have seen upon the shore
Of the wild Orkneys, strange bright seeds and
 vetches,
 And drifting weeds, of kinds unknown before;
 And a canoe
 Carved of some wood our builders never knew!

St. Brandan be our guide! Good angels be
 Our guard, and aid us where the many fail!
The wind is rising—Ha, who knows but we
 May be swept thither by this very gale?
 The Genoese
 Says land lies somewhere in these very seas!

When in the Bay we ride again at anchor
They will not scoff,—Yon fools who doubt the
truth.
Westward-Ho, comrades all! With hearts to con-
quer
The El Dorado and the Fount of Youth—
On, brave hearts, on
To the bright land beyond the setting sun!

CARMINA VOTIVA



TAKE HEART OF GRACE

TO E. C. S.

[With a Little Book]

TAKE heart of grace this morn of May,
My little song, and go your way.

Your coming he'll not take amiss,
But read between these lines, I wis,
The faltering words I fain would say
Of thanks for helpful thoughts.

I pray
You, stand no more on Yea and Nay
But haste—to meet that glance of his
Take heart of grace.

An if his path with garlands gay
Be strewn?—The one wild-flower we lay
Thereon, he will not flout for this!
In poet souls no scorn there is.
The first swift impulse blithe obey—
Take heart of grace.

MAY 30, 1886

(69)

A POET'S GIFT

TO E. C. S.

A POET's gift before me lies,
Gazed on through dim, tear-moistened eyes;
A letter with a line of praise,
A volume vellum-clad. The rays
Fall slantwise—the sun glorifies
My gift to gold: the morning flies.
I linger still, with happy sighs
Slow-murmuring in sweet amaze:
“A poet's *gift*?”

All else may fail me,—high emprise
Youth dreamed of, wealth, the friends that rise
To greet success,—“Yet” (my heart says,)
“One thing is mine through all my days,
A thing which Time himself defies—
A *poet's gift!*!”

JULY, 1886

(70)

WOMAN AND ARTIST

TO E. W. T.

If she neglected one especial gift
And turned from laurel crowns she might have won,
From the high tasks that genius might have done,
Dropping the pencil or the brush to lift
Wee baby feet across the stones, to sift
Meanings from childish prattle, and to croon
Low, tender, cradle-songs in dreamy tone;
Catching from baby eyes, as through a rift
In clouds, the light of heaven.—Is this a lot
To be deplored? Nay, would she if she could
Exchange? First, *woman*—after, poet—what
You will! Her soul has seized the greater good:
The dizzy heights of Fame were well forgot
To sound the wondrous depths of Motherhood.

(71)

A SINGER'S BIRTHDAY

TO H. W. L.

What idle tale is this of silvered hair?—
'Tis but the radiance from his Crown of Song;
Nor are those wrinkles which are deepening there,
But furrows such as to deep thought belong.

Poets grow never old like mortal men.
When their life's golden legend all is told,
And from the wearied fingers falls the pen,
They walk with God as Enoch walked of old.

Yet—though this world of bustle and of din
Be but the Wayside Inn wherein you wait
A little while, before you enter in
To the vast temple of Song; where Homer great,
Dante and Shakespeare, all strong souls we know,
Wait but your coming to complete the choir;—
Stay with us yet for many a year below
To cheer our hearts and lift our tried souls higher.

Make not your pleasure but our need your choice:
A hundred years were far too brief a time
In which to give life's mellowed wisdom voice,
To fit the perfect thought to golden rhyme.

Sing on, O Master, on whose tuneful breath
The world hangs listening; think not to die—
For should the Reaper come whose name is Death,
We'll hide you in our hearts till Death goes by!

FEBRUARY, 1880

DESERT-BOUNDED

TO E. S. P.

WOULD I, if any wish of mine
Could change my lot to one as fair
As yonder soul's, that sips the wine
Of life and rests on roses there,—

Would I to such a wish give voice?
Or in my loneliness onward press,
Crying: “Rejoice, who *can* rejoice!
I choose my rock-strewn wilderness;

“I choose the bitter with the sweet,
The thorn-pierced brow, the bleeding feet,
Even this soul-hunger fierce, if so,
My soul diviner life may know.”

O desert-bound and held apart
From crowded street and busy mart,
Denied that human sympathy,
The very wine of life to thee;

Be comforted. The locusts here
And honey wild for thee are best.
Perchance that fair lot seen too near
Would scarcely prove to thee so blest.

He knows, the All-wise, that some trial
Too fierce for thee therein must lie;
And love is kindest in denial
That puts the poisoned chalice by.

JANUARY 31, 1880

ACROSS THE SEA

TO S. M. B. P.

ACROSS the sea my little rhyme
I send you, mindful of the time,
O once-seen friend, I sought your door
Beside the blue Ohio's shore,
One "primrose time."

Ah, in our clime
No primrose marks the Spring's blithe prime,
But wind-flowers, wan as Winter's rime,
And violets,—bluer do skies bend o'er
Across the sea?

Do you not hear in dreams the chime
Of "dog-tooth" and blue-bells that climb
That hillside? "Come!" (all tongues implore)
"Return!—They cannot love you more
Than we love, even in lands sublime
Across the sea."

JUNE, 1886

THE TWO PATHS

TO * * *

STRIKE hands and part? But no, not so.
To the same goal our paths must go:
But while yon mountain path you tread
My feet through blossoming lanes are led.

I name the Name your lips confess
In Love and Truth and Righteousness:
Blame me not, friend, that still for me
Made warm and human Faith must be.

O not to all is given to bear
That higher, rarer atmosphere
Of the Eternal Silences,
Where only noblest souls may press.

Only the prophet soul with God
The veiliéd peak of Sinai trod;
Low on the plain the multitude
For some clear message waiting stood.

For you, enough the spirit's flame;
My lips the spoken word must frame.
The cross you do not need, must be
A strength and a support to me.

Then not " Farewell " twixt me and you,
Rather the nobler word *Adieu*,
With God we walk, or here or there;
God with us—for us each His care!

THE DANDELION

TO S. M. B. P.

THE dandelion disks of gold
Like mimic suns the greensward dot,
In woods beyond the meadow-lot
The violet's shy blue eyes unfold.
Bid blithe farewell to winter's cold
And troop to field from hall or cot

The dandelion disks of gold
Like mimic suns the greensward dot.

I'm jealous, sweet, lest you should hold
The primrose dearer!—Ah, be not
In English primrose time forgot
Our own gold-daisy, brave and bold,
The dandelion—whose disks of gold
Like mimic suns the greensward dot!

RHYMER'S REASON

TO W. E. B.

We've lived our sonnet, you and I.
We've had all best that life can show
Of smile and sigh, of throb and glow;
What reck we though Youth pass us by?

We've lived our sonnet, you and I.
Life moves no more to rapid rhyme.
We sing not now with easy art
Of loves and doves, of heart and dart,
As erst we sang in sonnet-time:

But "age" and "sage," instead we chime.
Yet who, with saucy mocking tongue
Dare call us old? We smile, and know
Grey hairs and wrinkles we can show—
Antic disguises merely, flung
To hide the masking soul still young.

Whom Love hath kissed grows never old.
The draught he gave he stole in truth
From yon fount of Eternal Youth,
Hid in the fabled land of gold,
To which fond pilgrims fared of old.

So, listening to life's vesper chime,
We lift our children on our knee;
And in their dancing eyes we see
The dawn of love, the bliss at prime,
 The glad youth of our sonnet-time.

ROSE SONGS, ETC.

PRELUDE

*“It is the Wood of Faërie
With linden-fragrance breathing,
The wondrous spell of the weird moonlight
Around my heart is wreathing.*

*I wander on, and as I stray
A song comes downward ringing:
It is the nightingale, of love
And of love’s sorrow singing,
Of love and of love’s agony,
Of laughter and of weeping;
So sad, so sweet—across my heart
Forgotten dreams come sweeping.”*

Translation from HEINE.

ROSENLIED

I.

I SAID to the rose, “ O rose!
 What was it the nightingale sang?
For all night beneath my lattice
 In the dusk his clear notes rang.”

Then the hue of the crimson rose
 Was dyed a lovelier red,
And she trembled with passionate longing,
 And drooped her gentle head.

“ Last night beside the lattice,
 Before the white moon set,
Two stood within the shadow—
 O heart! dost thou forget?

“ A kiss; and two hands close clinging
 In a silent, long troth-plight,—
O heart, O heart, thou knowest
 What the nightingale sang all night!”

ROSENLED

II.

THE nightingale sang to the rose
Through the livelong night,
Till its hue from a ruby-red
Turned wan and white.
All night it rose and fell—
That silvery strain,
And the heart of the red rose throbbed
With divinest pain:

“O love, O love!” (it rang),
“I love but thee.
Thou art queen of all flowers,” (he sang),
“And queen of me!
O love, *my* love!” he said.
Before the dawn
The rose on its stalk hung dead.
The bird was gone.
(88)

THE DYING ROSE TO THE NIGHTIN- GALE

WHAT were the gifts of a thousand lovers
To that one perfect song of thine,
Whose liquid cadence around me hovers
Steeping my soul in bliss divine.

O to live and to love forever!
Out of my petals fades the red;
The night and thy song, O love, are over;
I am dying, and thou—art fled.

Fled! Live on then,—and love another;
That can not rob me of my bliss,
Though thou shouldst woo a hundred, no other,
Never a one, wilt thou love like this!

Thou too must pass death's shadowy portal;
Naught will remain but this song of thine.
Life is fleeting but song is immortal;
Half of thy fame is also mine.

I dare not weep though I fade forever;
More from a century none could win.
This is my joy, that never, oh never,
Save for me, love, thy song had been!

THE PAGE SINGS

*"It was a squire of low degree
Loved a King's daughter of Hongrie."*

THERE'S a crown of red gold in your hair,
Lady mine,
And on bosom and neck rich and rare
Jewels shine;
But dearer to me are the fair golden tresses
Than all of the wealth that a monarch possesses,
The fair brow more precious I hold
Than the crown of red gold!

The King and his court are asleep.
Only I
Am awake: "neath your bower I creep,
There to sigh
To the nightwind, that moans with my heart, all
my passion;
To gaze on your casement the while that I fashion
Your features and form in my mind,
And that last look—so kind!

Send down from your far window's height,
Lady mine,
One glance from the eyes filled with light
So divine.

My princess—Ah sure you may grant a boon that is
So slight, to the page who sings under your lattice!
Draw near and look down while I sing;
He is sleeping—the king.

WOOING

[HE SPEAKS]

AT last I spoke. O faint and sweet
As a strain of distant song
Was the smile that just touched mouth and eyes
As we two passed along,
Through sun and shade of yonder glade
Where early violets throng.

It's "O love, my true love,
And will you be my wife?
Love like mine for you, love,
Ends not even with life!"

A sigh, a glance, a rosy blush,
A softly whispered "Yes"—
And it seemed that all the joy of heaven
Came down my soul to bless,

In that first bliss of warm troth-kiss
When lips to fond lips press.

"And O love, my true love,
Be but true to me,
As I to you, love,
Evermore will be."

“Sweet, sweet, sweet!” the wild birds trilled,
A-building their tiny nest,
And “Sweet, sweet,” the brown bee hummed
As it swung on a clover-crest,
And “Sweet,” sighed low a summer wind
As it swooned on the rose’s breast.
And “O love, my true love,
Strong are Time and Death,
But love like mine for you, love,
They can not change!” he saith.

CAMPION

I PLACED a scarlet campion flower
In the wreathed tresses of my head.
“No damosel in hall or bower
Is fairer than my love,” he said.

Years after in a folded book
I found a withered campion flower;
And paled, with that swift backward look
That ghost-seers have at twilight hour.

O withered heart, O love long dead!
“Poor faded flower that shone so fair,
Well suits thy phantom bloom” (I said)
“With the white tresses of my hair.”

A SONG OF FLEETING LOVE

LOVE has wings as light as a bird,
Guileless he looks, as a dove, of wrong.—
Whatever his song, be it brief or long,
It still has this for an overword:

“ Love has wings! ”

Though to-day the truant may stay,
Though he woos and sues and sings;
Only sorrow to maids he brings—
Pout him and flout him, laugh him away:
Love has wings.

Hold your pulses calm, unstirred—
Calm and cool as a woodland pool,
Let not his song your heart be-fool;
List, through it all, for the overword:
“ Love has wings.”

(95) .

THE POISON FLASK

[*Temp. LOUIS XV.*]

A CRYSTAL flasket: one drop (ay, that's all)
 Of its clear contents well administered—
Dripped in the succory water, say,—she'll fall
 Dead in a flash, with no accusing word.
Not that I mean to do it! Nay, the nerve
 Is scarce mine. Something, though, it is, to hold
Here in my hand the subtle spell might serve
 To stretch that supple body stiff and cold!

Gods, how I hate her!—with those sleepy eyes
 Like two gray agates filled with lambent light
Hate that full bosom's lazy fall and rise,
 The red ripe lips, the cheek's vermeil and
 white!

I loathe your lush blonde beauties. I am dark—
 Small and so dark—eyes, brows and dusky hair,
My skin's a clearer white than hers though,
 mark,—
If she were gone the king would find me fair.

If she were gone.—This liqueur has the hue
 Of liquid diamonds, what a flash that was!
This gold top's chasing, now, is curious, too:
 How clear the crystal is and free from flaws.
Venetian?—fit to hold (the chymist said)
 These Medicean drops—the very same
That Catherine used to mingle with the red
 Wine draught of certain friends who crossed
 her game.

If Artemise were gone. A better way
 Might be—to spoil her beauty by the art
Of some infernal wash, some acid, say,
 In her cosmetics, to eat, scar, and smart.
That is a wild dream only! What I seek
 Is something quick and final.—Not a trace
Left of the method.—Dead folks never speak,
 Even if they return to haunt the place.

A poisoned ring would be at once suspect,
 That's such an old device; and the bouquet,
And gloves with poisoned perfumes, all reject
 Save the mere novice. If—mind *if*, I say,—
The deed were done with this, there is no clue
 Whereby Justice the author could divine.
She lives but at my will! And I—I know

If she were gone the king—the *king* were
mine!

How small the flask is. Small enough to swing
Here at my girdle with the silver keys
Held by the chatelaine. I'll wear the thing
Just so upon the chain; and if she sees
And wonders at the bauble, I reply
It is—'tis my scent flasket, vinaigrette!—
No, no! I'll wear it not! I'll put it by
In the carved casket there with jewels set.

So, then, I turn the key upon the flask
Of liquid death. I shall not use it—No.
But it is sweet to feel how slight a task
'Twould be to bring her insolent beauty low.
I'll keep it then; sometimes, perhaps, unlock
The casket's secret drawer, hang gloating o'er
My deadly treasure.—Ha! Was that a knock?
Some one is standing just without the door.

'Tis Artemise herself. "Yes! Enter, straight."
What means the look of triumph in her eye?
"How radiant, sweet!—robed as for some grand
fête!
What lovely pearls!—a queen for such might
sigh.

Ah—How. You dine tonight, love, with the king?

You happy girl! Nay, wait one moment yet.
I'll scarce ten seconds keep you tarrying.

See! I but fasten on—my vinaigrette."

JUNE ROSES

O ROSES, June roses! From yonder beds of bloom
Is wafted toward me your subtile faint perfume,
Which draws me, half-willing, as 'twere a greeting sweet,

To stay in your presence the going of my feet.

O red rose, deep red rose! the emblem of a heart
Encrimsoned with passion and youthful love thou art;

But white rose, the right rose art thou, belovéd, sure,
To symbol that heart made by pain and sorrow pure.

O roses, fair roses, you bring me bitter ruth,
You mind me of yonder fair summer time in youth--
Two stood by a window where clung the wild sweetbriar,

And roses whose hearts glowed with strange and subtile fire.

O roses, list, roses: he murmured, "Take this rose
Which symbols the passion that in my bosom glows;
O take it and keep it and keep the love as well!"
The love I had no word for the blushes rose to tell.

And roses, O roses!—that rose, I have it yet,
No longer its petals with morning dew are wet,
Its hot crimson blushes are faded now and gone,
It lies in my casket all scentless, white and wan.

O roses, O roses! that love died long ago.
I wept not its going: I knew 'twas better so.
And I put by a ring and a broken troth-plight
When I put by my red rose, had faded into white.

O roses, June roses, my life is fair and bright,
I've passed from the night-gloom of sorrow into
light;
But in the June weather when purple roses blow,
I sigh, through all my smiling, at thought of long
ago.

THE SPINNER

FROM THE GERMAN OF VOSS

I SAT and spun before my door:
A youth along the road came straying,
His hazel eyes a deep smile wore,
And blushes on his cheek were playing;
My glance was from the distaff won,
I sat abashed, and spun and spun.

In friendly tones, "Good day!" he spoke,
With timid grace approaching nigher:
Startled was I, the thread it broke,
My foolish heart leapt high and higher.
The thread once more I fastened on,
And sat abashed, and spun and spun.

He clasped, with tender touch, my hand,
And vowed none could with it compare—
The very loveliest in the land,
So swan-white, plump and dainty fair!
As with his praise my heart he won
I sat abashed, and spun and spun.

Upon my chair he laid his arm,
And praised the finely-wroughten thread.
So near his mouth, so red and warm,
How gently: "Sweetest maid!" it said!
The while he gazed my face upon
I sat abashed, and spun and spun.

His handsome face toward my own
Meantime he bent with glances winning;
It touched, by some odd chance unknown,
My head that nodded in the spinning:
He kissed me, this audacious one!—
I sat abashed, and spun and spun.

I turned, reproof in earnest tone
Upon his forwardness bestowing;
He clasped me close and, bolder grown,
He kissed my face with blushes glowing.
O tell me sisters—every one!
Is't strange that now no more I spun?

PLIGHTED. A. D. 1874

*"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one."*

NELLIE loquitur.

BLESS my heart! You're come at last.
Awful glad to see you, dear!
Thought you'd died or something, Belle—
Such an age since you've been here!
My engagement? Gracious! Yes.
Rumor's hit the mark this time.
And the victim? Charley Gray,
Know him, don't you? Well, he's *prime*.
Such mustachios! Splendid style!
Then he's not so horrid fast—
Waltzes like a seraph, too,
Has some fortune—best and last.
Love him? Nonsense. Don't be "soft."
Pretty much as love now goes;
He's devoted, and in time
I'll get used to him, I s'pose.
First love? Humbug. Don't talk stuff.
Bella Brown, don't be a fool!
Next you'll rave of flames and darts
Like a chit at boarding school.

Don't be "miffed," I talked just so
Some two years back. Fact, my dear!
But two seasons kill romance,
Leave one's views of life quite clear.
Why, if Will Latrobe had asked
When he left, two years ago,
I'd have thrown up all and gone
Out to Kansas, do you know?
Fancy me a settler's wife!
Blest escape, dear, was it not?
Yes, its hardly in my line
To enact "Love in a Cot."
Well, you see, I'd had my swing,
Been engaged to eight or ten:
Got to stop some time of course,
So it don't much matter when,
Auntie hates old maids, and thinks
Every girl should marry young—
On that theme my whole life long
I have heard the changes rung!
So, *ma belle*, what could I do?
Charley wants a stylish wife,
We'll suit well enough, no fear,
When we settle down for life.
But for love—stuff! See my ring?

Lovely, isn't it? Solitaire.
Nearly made Maude Hinton turn
Green with envy and despair,
Her's aint half so nice, you see—
Did I write you, Belle, about
How she tried for Charley, till
I sailed in and cut her out?
Now she's taken Jack McBride,
I believe it's all from pique—
Threw him over once you know,—
Hates me so she'll scarcely speak.
O yes! Grace Church, Brown, and that,
Pa won't mind expense at last,
I'll be off his hands for good;
Cost a fortune two years past.
My trousseau shall outdo Maude's,
I've *carte blanche* from Pa, you know;
Mean to have my dress from Worth!
Won't she just be *raving* though?

SIC SEMPER

“Varium et mutabile semper femina.”

VIRGIL, B. IV; 569.

SOPHOMORUS *loquitur.*

I MET her, you know, at that party
Last summer at Minnie Latrobe's.
Such eyes! and she knew how to use 'em.
She wore the most gorgeous of robes.
Her hair was the loveliest golden,
Her eyes were a heavenly brown:
Yes! I may as well own I was smitten,
Hit hard, sir! Completely “bowled down.”

She said she did *so* like mustachios,
And she glanced, as she spoke, at a pair
That I think *have* wrought some execution
In the hearts of susceptible fair.
I vowed that her eyes were the loadstars
That henceforth should guide my life-barque!
(I got somewhat mixed in that figure—
A fact which she didn't remark.)

She thought that small men were “just *horrid*;”

(My height is just even six feet.)

And she said that the lines which I quoted,

From Byron, were “perfectly sweet.”

I treasured the flower that she gave me,

Kept the glove that she lost on the lawn;

And we walked on that shaded piazza,

And talked till the guests were half gone.

And all through the long weeks that followed

We danced and we drove and we sung;

Don’t laugh, Hal! A fellow can’t help it

If sometimes his words are high-strung.

She sighed and looked sad when we parted,

And vowed she would never forget;

She gave me the curl that I asked for,—

That same golden tress I have yet.

Corresponded? Of course. All her letters

Are there in that desk, save the last—

’Tis that which imparts to my visage,

At present, its serious cast.

Look there! In that postscript she tells me

She’s *engaged*—to that muff, Oscar Brown!

“The wedding will be in December,”

She “does so hope” that I’ll be in town.

“*Varium et mutabile semper*”—

 Virgil knew the whole sex, like a book,
 That's the way with 'em all, false and fickle,
 However confiding they look.
 Confound it! who'd think it mere flirting,
 Who looked in those tender eyes then?
 Mind this! If I live to a hundred,
 I'll ne'er trust a woman again.

[*But he does.*]

THE INNER LIFE

THE SIN OF OMISSION

*“For it came to pass while thy servant was busy hither and thither,
the man was gone.”*

FOR I was busy hither and yon

 And to and fro !

Working the Master’s work, I thought.

 Ah me, I know—

Looking aback across the years—

 It was not so.

Busy—pursuing, with blinded zeal,

 Some vague wild plan,

Whereby the world should be sooner freed

 From error’s ban,

And Earth become Paradise once more,

 For sinful man.

Over the bars of my garden gate,

 With wan pale face,

One, wistful, gazed at the Summer bloom

 That filled the place;

With hand outstretched, as if entreating

 A moment’s grace.

But I was busy with greater things—
A whole world's fate;
Should I turn from these to the beggar there
Without my gate?
And I said: “Not now, but another time,
He will surely wait!”

So I toiled at my task with fevered haste
Till eve came on.

Then I went my way in the sunset gleam,
O'er the grass-clad lawn
To my garden wicket:—But lo! I found
The man was gone.

And the deeds that I wrought that busy day,
Proved vain, the whole,
And now too late, ah me ! I know
In my inmost soul,
'Twas an angel that stood in beggar's guise,
And craved my dole.

Now the livelong day with tristful heart,
I stand and wait,
Gazing and gazing adown the path;
But ah; too late!
The blessed presence will pause no more
Beside my gate.

IN THE KING'S NAME

“ IN the King’s Name!” will say
Some day the Shadow grim,
And we all silently
Shall straightway follow him,
Rending the veil away
“ As through a glass ” to see
No more, with vision dim.

What shall our eyes behold
When once that veil is lift?
A new Jerusalem
With radiant walls that sift
Heaven’s glory through many a gem;
With shining streets of gold,
And the angels walking in them?—

Or will the heavenly scene
Be such as here we know?
The heavenly mansions be,
Perchance, not all aglow
With gold and glitter and sheen—
But *radiant with love that we*
Have known before—below!

Dear Lord, if this might be!—
That it might be the same
Dear home that in bygone days
Made earth an Eden below!—
How gladly would I go
When the Shadow with veiled face,
Bade come “In the King's Name!”

THE WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS

To ISRAEL cherished of the Lord,
Abiding in the stranger's land,
Came her Jehovah's wakening word:
“Rise, follow my directing hand!”
And through the dark sea's rolling tide,
With His own glory for a guide,
Went forth the band.

My soul, abiding in the gloom
Of error's night, His message heard,
And straightway in its living tomb
The waking soul within me stirred:
“Arise, and follow! In the sea,
Or desert's waste, I am with thee;
Thus saith the Lord.”

“Behold Thy servant, Lord!” I cried,
And straightway rose and went with haste
Forth through the sea's arrested tide,
And entered on the desert's waste,
And here my soul hath wandered long
With aimless steps, by its own wrong
And terror chased.

Because I murmured at Thy will,
And longed for Egypt's vanished joys,
And wept the heathen's food, which still
 Even of its very sweetness cloys.
But Thou hadst mercy and forbore
 Thine angered spirit chastens sore,
 Yet not destroys.

The path I tread is long and drear,
 Aimless its wanderings seem to me,
And oft in doubting mood I fear
 The Promised Land I ne'er shall see.
But even though I faint and fall
 Within the path, I know in all
 Thou leadest me.

And for the food in Egypt left,
 Thou giv'st the manna of Thy word;
To quench my thirst the rocks are cleft,
 And living springs within them stirred.
Mine idols Thou wilt put away,
 And teach my stubborn soul to pray
 “Thy will, O Lord!”

And sometimes as a cloud of grief
 Upon my way Thou guidest me,
And often for a season brief

As living fire Thy might I see;
But whether cloud or fire doth go
Before my path, in each I know
Thou leadest me.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Who is the blessed guest
Here present at the feast?

Is it not Christ the Lord,
Who comes, with silent tread,
To join the table spread
According to His word?

He blest the bread and brake,
Saying: "Take, eat for my sake."
He poured the ruddy wine:
"For love of me this do.
My Father gives to you
Share of the life divine!"

And other guests are here,
All that we held most dear;
The loved and early lost
Gather with us to-day,
To kneel and feast and pray,—
A shadowy, silent host.

With them and Thee *at one*
Make us, as we commune,
 Father of Life and Love!
Fashion us to Thy will;
Cast from our hearts all ill;
 Turn every thought above.

O Thou, who knowest our need,
Our hungry spirits feed
 With Thine own bread of life:
Into our souls like wine
Pour Thou the strength divine
 To aid us in the strife!

THE THREE-FOLD TESTIMONY

“God is Love.”—ST. JOHN.

God is the Summit of Truth.—EMERSON.

God is the Best that Man can know.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

STILL “from faith to faith” uplifted,
Living out his sense of right,
Man moves Godward through the ages;
Climbing slow from height to height.

“Father, Son and Holy Spirit”—
So the earlier souls confess:
We, their latest heirs, inherit
Love and Truth and Righteousness.

Christlike Love—the Eternal Human,
Shall walk with us through all time;
Righteousness—the Eternal Helpful,
Lifts us toward Truth sublime.

Something grander than our finite,
Something higher than our best;
All enfolding, all upholding,
To the soul made manifest.

This is God, the great Eternal,
Be he *what* he may, or *where*,
In His being He uniteth
Wisdom, Love and Helpful Care.

AFTER LONG WAITING

“WAIT? Wait?—Dear God, how can I wait!
When I would fain arise and go
Forth to thy fields to till and sow,
Early and late?”
And still He bade me: “Wait.”

“Rest?—But I pant for action! Rest?—
Nay, rest I can not. Let me strive!
Rest’s for the dead; I am alive,
And toil is best.”
Yet my Lord answered: “Rest.”

I waited; chafing hour by hour
At enforced idlesse, wasted strength.
Lo, now He bids me work, at length,
With all my power,
In this the eleventh hour.

And now my tired eyes clearer see
How all my zeal had been misplaced;
Toil had been fruitless; haste been waste.
Be patient:—He,
From all beginning, the end doth see.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

*"The Spirit of Truth, which we * hold forth to be the saving rule of life, and from which the Scriptures proceeded, is the greatest of all."*—WILLIAM WILLIAMS, HIS JOURNAL, 1810.

RITE, temple, priest, psalm, Word,
Not these the spirit needs:
The “still small voice” is heard
Above the clash of creeds.

That voice unto each heart
In gentlest tones will speak,
If it but draw apart,
From all, in reverence meek.

Law, temple, priest and rite—
For these we thank Thee, Lord,
For the uplifting might
Within Thy written Word.

But, Lord, we thank Thee most
For this small voice within!
This is Thine Holy Ghost,
Our safeguard against sin.

* The Society of Friends, more commonly known as Quakers.

This is Thy *living* Word,
Which speaks to every age:
By earnest seekers heard,
Or peasant, priest, or sage.

Thy temple is mine heart—
“Thy kingdom is within:”
Thy priest, myself; thy rite,
Each conquest over sin.

Temple, priest, Word, law, rite,
Hath not each true soul then.
That striveth for the Light?
Yea, Lord,—Be praised! Amen.

MAGDALEN

"We commit to the ground the body of this our deceased sister."—
BURIAL SERVICE.

“THIS our sister.” Turn the earthclods under,
Heap them high above the quiet breast;
Ceasing longer now to fear or wonder,
This, our sister, is at last at rest.

“This, our sister!” Surely you are mocking.
Why, this self-same form I’ve seen before,
Through the streets of yonder city walking,
Pitilessly spurned from door to door.

Driven swiftly to a sure perdition,
Scouted, scorned and mocked with bitter jeers:
Finding never place for her contrition,
Though she sought it eagerly with tears.

Never gentle hand outstretched for saving,
Never voice to give in tender tone
Aught of sympathy her heart was craving—
Till she perished, outcast and alone.

Surely, surely, had this been “our sister,”
We had hearkened to her frenzied prayer;
Not unmoved our hearts had been to list her
Contrite moaning and her wild despair.

Had she been our sister—tempted, sinning—

We had hastened to uplift and save, [ning
Had deemed time and pains well spent in win-
Back *our sister* from a living grave.

One there was who felt no shame in owning,
Publicans and sinners for his kin;
Who withheld the rabble rout from stoning
Such another, taken in her sin.

“This our sister?” Ay, she was our sister!
Covered though she be with sin’s dark blight,
And our hands—too dainty to assist her—
Are they guiltless in the Master’s sight?

Cain’s wild cry, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”
Think you it availed him much with God?
Friends, than Cain have we erred less or deeper,
Towards the one who sleeps beneath this sod?

TIRED

FOR only a little time if I might lay down my life,

Resting here in the silence, out of the heat and strife!

Let me crouch down here in the shadow, while the noisy fray sweeps by—

I am weary; so weary, comrades, if I rest not now, I die.

What was our slogan? “*Action* is ever the soul’s true rest!”

Action!—You’ll witness, brothers, how long I strove with the best.

From day dawn till dewy even with tireless hand I wrought.

Woe, woe, that this final failure should make that record naught!”

Friends, when the Master cometh (as come he surely must,)

When he finds me heavily sleeping and my good sword dimmed with rust,

While you on your reeking sabres lean near, all flushed and warm;

When he looks on your glowing faces, then down to my nerveless form—

O, tell him that never with terror or pain my
face once paled,
It was not the will that faltered, it was only the
strength that failed;
That I'd fain have watched till his coming, even
as he did command:—
And somehow I think that the Master will surely
understand!

What were his words? “Ye weary and heavy
laden, come!”

Were they meant for me too, I wonder? Already
my hands are numb,
And my eyelids heavily drooping. Is this the
slumber blest
He gives to his beloved? Is this the promised
rest?

O, ye who strive! your guerdon I pray you may
surely reap,—
For you is the golden harvest; for me is the
dreamless sleep.

Strive on, O strong and fearless! unheeding that
I fall—

But say to the Master, I fain would have ans-
wered to his call.

DAILY BREAD

"Give us this day our daily bread."

WHAT is this bread
Wherewith we're daily fed?
One time in thoughtful mood I questioning
said.

Is't wheaten loaves?
Or bread fruit from the groves?
Or crust unleavened such as Jewry loves?

Were such the feast,
How better than the beast
In yonder field, were man's life in the least?

“By bread alone
Man shall not live,” said One
Unto the tempter in rebuking tone.

“By earthly bread
Alone, man is not fed;
But by each word that comes from the God-head.”

Each word?—Each thought
Which hitherto hath brought
The soul more near the virtue which it sought;

Each earnest hope
Which gives to Faith new scope,
Each gleam that lights this darkness where we
grope;

And each desire
Which lifts the mortal higher
Toward that immortal whereto we aspire:—

This is that bread
Wherewith our souls are fed,
Without which man, indeed, in sin were dead.

Then day by day,
Give me, dear Lord, I pray
That bread which shall my fasting spirit stay!

TOLD IN A PARABLE

*Who hath not eyes to see nor ears to hear—
Eyes whose insight by sorrow is made clear,
And ears made keen by breathless listening
For the slow steps of messengers that bring
The answer unto prayers,—who hath not these,
Will find no line within this tale to please.
Let him look farther: only unto those
Who hear and see, its meaning will unclose.*

One had a closet in a secret nook,
And none, save him alone, therein might look.
The many wondered oft and whispered low:
“Thither in dead of night the man doth go!
Does he not keep some treasure hidden there—
Gold, it may be, or jewels rich and rare?”

But he, when he would hear, smiled bitterly,
And closed his hand the firmer on the key
Which hung upon his breast, and patient kept
Vigil until the world about him slept;
Then went his way, and stood, with anguished face,
Gazing into the darkness of the place.

No treasure there! The gloom was tenanted
By a gaunt skeleton, grawsome and dread,—

A great crime or a sorrow? or the ghost
Of a fond hope? some grand ideal lost?
I do not know (the story's not mine own);
And only God and that poor man alone
Knew its full history.

With sob and groan

He bowed before it, grovelling in the dust,
And bore its bitter taunts as one who must;
Answering not again the while with jeers
And cruel laugh it mocked his falling tears,
And gloated o'er his misery.

At length

The very depth of his despair gave strength
Unto his soul to battle with his woe;
Till he could say: "I will arise and go
Forth from these shadows to the sunlit earth,
And drown my sorrow in her sounds of mirth."

With that the awful shape pealed laughter worse,
In its weird glee, than had been any curse.
"Yea, go!" it said, "But ever at your side,
Through each new scene of pleasure I will glide,
Turning its bliss to bale, its song to shriek."

He answered "Be it so. Then will I seek

The company of mourners. It may be
This much of solace may be granted me,—
To lighten grief of others; to atone
With painful care for evil not my own."

"Go! go!" it cried, "But think not to escape.
You must bear ever with you in some shape
The memory of your past." "That memory,"
He said, "perchance shall teach mine eye to see
Some woe another's might have missed!"

And so
He went his way. All mourners, high and low,
He sought; and strove to comfort and to heal
All wounds his own grief taught his heart to feel.

And ever as he worked, he was aware
Of a strong presence at his side whene'er
A deed of kindly charity he wrought,—
A presence with an angel's features fraught
With tender sympathy; whose words of cheer
Strengthened his soul to put aside his fear,
And seek in patient work for Mercy's sake
A little to forget the bitter ache
He bore within his heart.

No woe, no pain
That he could ease, to him appealed in vain.

Through scenes of misery and vice and want,
The “outer darkness” of the outcast’s haunt,
Wherever deed of wrong could be redressed,
Cheering the faint, uplifting the oppressed,
With pitying face and helpful hand he passed.

Thus reaching out to all his race, at last
His own tried spirit came in time to be
Touched with all feelings of humanity;
Weeping with those who wept, he came to know
The joy of those who do rejoice also;
Lifted above his old sore pain and grief,
He found a solace in the same relief
He tendered others; and the wild unrest
Which drove him forth, departed from his breast.

And so long years went by in loving deeds
And patient ‘tendance on the sufferers’ needs,
Until at length he came, with bated breath,
Again to gaze into that house of death.
And lo! There stood an angel in the place
Of the gaunt terror he had left. The face
Of the bless’d presence was the face he knew
So long as his dear guide’s!

And straight, unto
Him wondering, a voice began to speak

In well known accents: "I am that ye seek,—
The same, yet not the same. Nor think it strange,
Naught is immutable since Time and Change
Work as they have worked ever. Had you stayed,
Cowering in secret, trembling and afraid,
I still had been your tyrant. But since well
You wrought for Truth's sake and for Love's, the
spell

Which changed your darkened soul changed also
me,

Till I became the shining one you see,
Strong to assist and cheer as once to ban."

'Then hand in hand the presence and the man
Passed on, and glad content filled all his days.

*I think God's mercy findeth many ways
To comfort us when least we would expect;
And even the rocks whereon our hopes are wrecked,
When we look back across the years, shall stand
Like hallowed altars reared by angel's hand.*

*For life tends on and upward. By mistakes
We learn. The hand which crushed our idols
takes
Our own, and leads us to new shrines; whose
light*

*Shines but the brighter for past error's night.
All sin and sorrow, shame, disgrace and pain,
Are made His ministers. From loss comes gain.
Out of all ill it must be He will make
Some good to come, for His dear Mercy's sake;
That we may find an angel in the place
Of the gaunt skeleton with grisly face.*

GOD KNOWS

GOD knows, not I, the devious way

Wherein my faltering feet must tread
Before, into the light of day,

My steps from out this gloom are led.
And since my Lord the path doth see
What matter if 'tis hid from me?

God knows, not I, how sweet accord

Shall grow at length from out this crash
Of earthly discords which have jarred
On soul and sense. I hear the clash—
Yet feel and know that on His ear
Breaks Harmony—full, deep, and clear.

God knows, not I, why, when I'd fain

Have walked in pastures green and fair,
The path appointed me hath lain

Through rocky deserts bleak and bare.
I blindly trust—since 'tis His will—
This way lies safety; that way, ill.

He knows, too, why, despite my will

I'm weak when I should be most strong,
And, after earnest wrestling, still

I see the right, yet do the wrong.
Is't that He'd have me learn at length
Not mine, but His—the saving strength?

His perfect plan I may not grasp,
But I can trust Love Infinite,
And with my feeble fingers clasp
The Hand which leads me to the Light:
My soul upon His errand goes—
The end I know not. But God knows.

A SONG OF REST

Beati, beati, mortui.

NAY—no sorrow.

We but sleep, to wake to-morrow;
Go your way,
Leave me in my house of clay.
Let me rest, with sunlight sifting
Through the boughs, and red leaves drifting
On the grass. No fear that I
Shall be lonesome where I lie.

Work is done,
And my rest is but begun.
Calm and still
In my house upon the hill
I have time to lie at ease,
To hold converse with the trees,
And the marvellous sky, and all
Nature's wonders great and small.

The procession of the year
In review shall pass me here;
Winter's miracle of the snow,
Spring's display of bud and blow,
Summer's wealth of roses, all
Of Autumn's grand High Carnival.

I shall hear the acorn falling,
I shall hear the wild duck calling
To his mate on yonder lake.
I shall see the mornings break—
See the cool diaphanous mist
Turn from grey to amethyst,
Watch the gathering twilight,
Learn the mystery of the night,
And the eternal stars shall see,
One by one, shine over me.

In this bed that holds but one
It is good to lie alone
For a little while, apart
From all stir of brain or heart;
Resting, waiting, learning still
How the Master works His will.

Yet so sure as I lie here
Without pain and without fear
Under the eternal skies,
Yea, so surely I shall rise,
When the time is come, and go
On God's errands to and fro.

“All our times are in God's hand.”
All—not one, you understand.

Death no stranger is than birth,
And life does not end with earth;
Other paths the soul must tread,
All is not over for the dead.

Dead?—There is no Death;—the rest
In the music, just the pause
Which is one of Music's laws,
Is this time of quiet bless'd.

Go your way.

Leave me in my house of clay;
Vex me not with idle sorrow:
Death's of to-day but Life is of the Morrow.

HARVEST HOME

*If the echo of my singing
Has been, yet, the means of bringing
Aught of joy to any spirit
Overshadowed, faint with fear;
If when any heart was breaking
It has somewhat stilled the aching,
Till the voice of God's evangel
Through the silence might draw near;*

*If in any night of sorrow
It has whispered of a morrow
When the sun should shine out clearly,
All the clouds of grief be gone:
Not in vain beneath the sun
Is the task my hand has done,
To one talent which He gave me
There is added other one.*

*So, when through the evening's quiet
Comes to me the solemn fiat:
“Work is ended.—To the Master
Bring the sheaves which thou hast bound!”
When the awe-filled voice I hear,
I shall rise up without fear,—
Not, as once I thought to, trembling
And heart-quaking at the sound.*

*I shall rise and bear along
In my hand my sheaves of song,
And go humbly till I kneel me
 In the presence of his face,
And, with downcast eyelids, say :—
“ Master, in thy sight this day
 Let the offering (I pray thee !)
 That I bring to thee, find grace !*

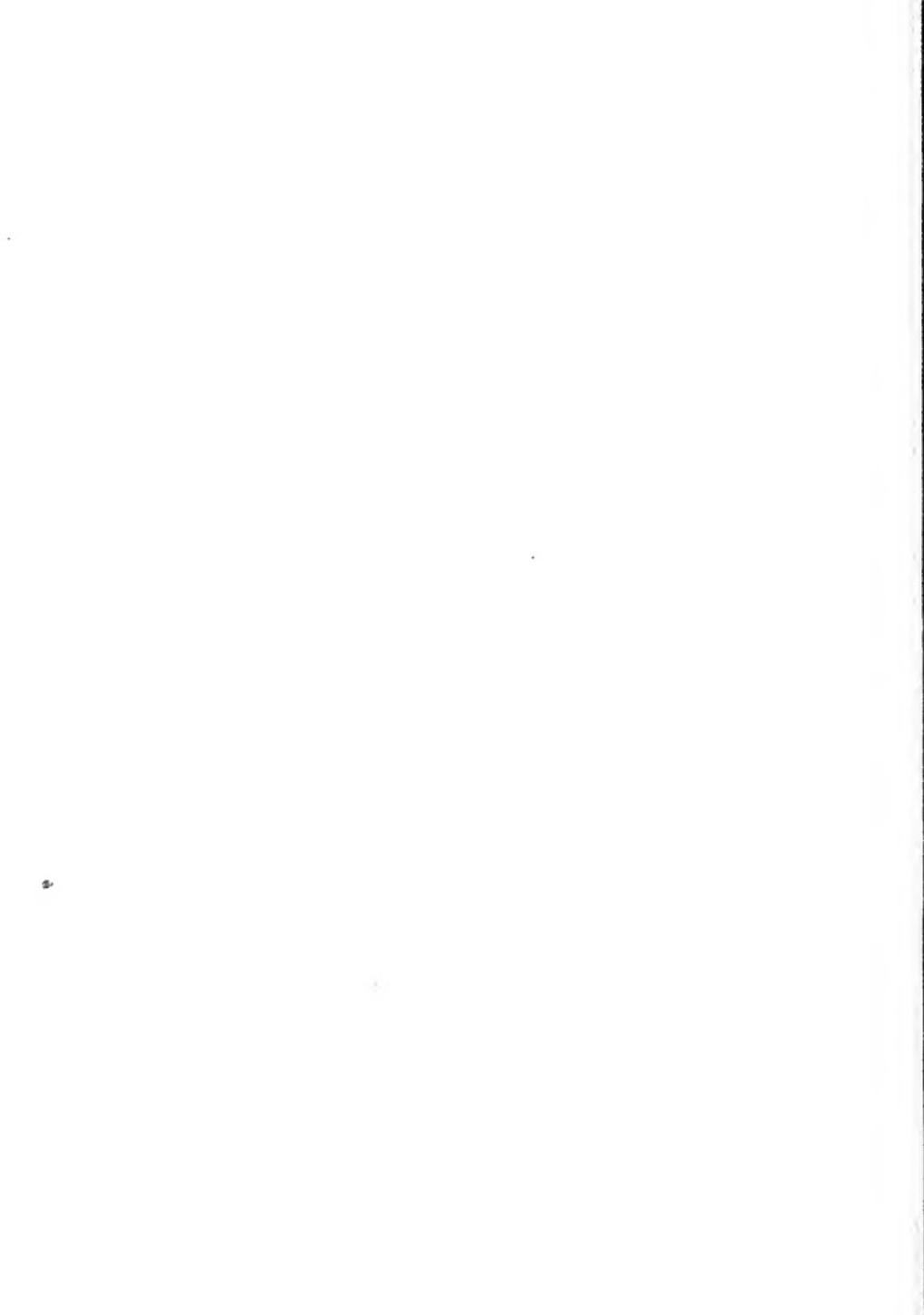
*“ Little are my harvest gains,
Not for me the crowded wains
Heaped with golden grain : these few sheaves,
 Lord, are all I have to show,
For my tilling of thy soil,
For my years of tears and toil ;
 Yea, these only can I give thee
 For the seed thou didst bestow.*

*“ But since faithfully I wrought,
Toiling ever, resting not ;
Judge not by the harvest’s scantness
 Of the fervor of my zeal :
And I pray thee (I shall say)
 That my humble offering may
 Still find favor with thee ! ” (Hushed then
 I shall listen where I kneel.)*

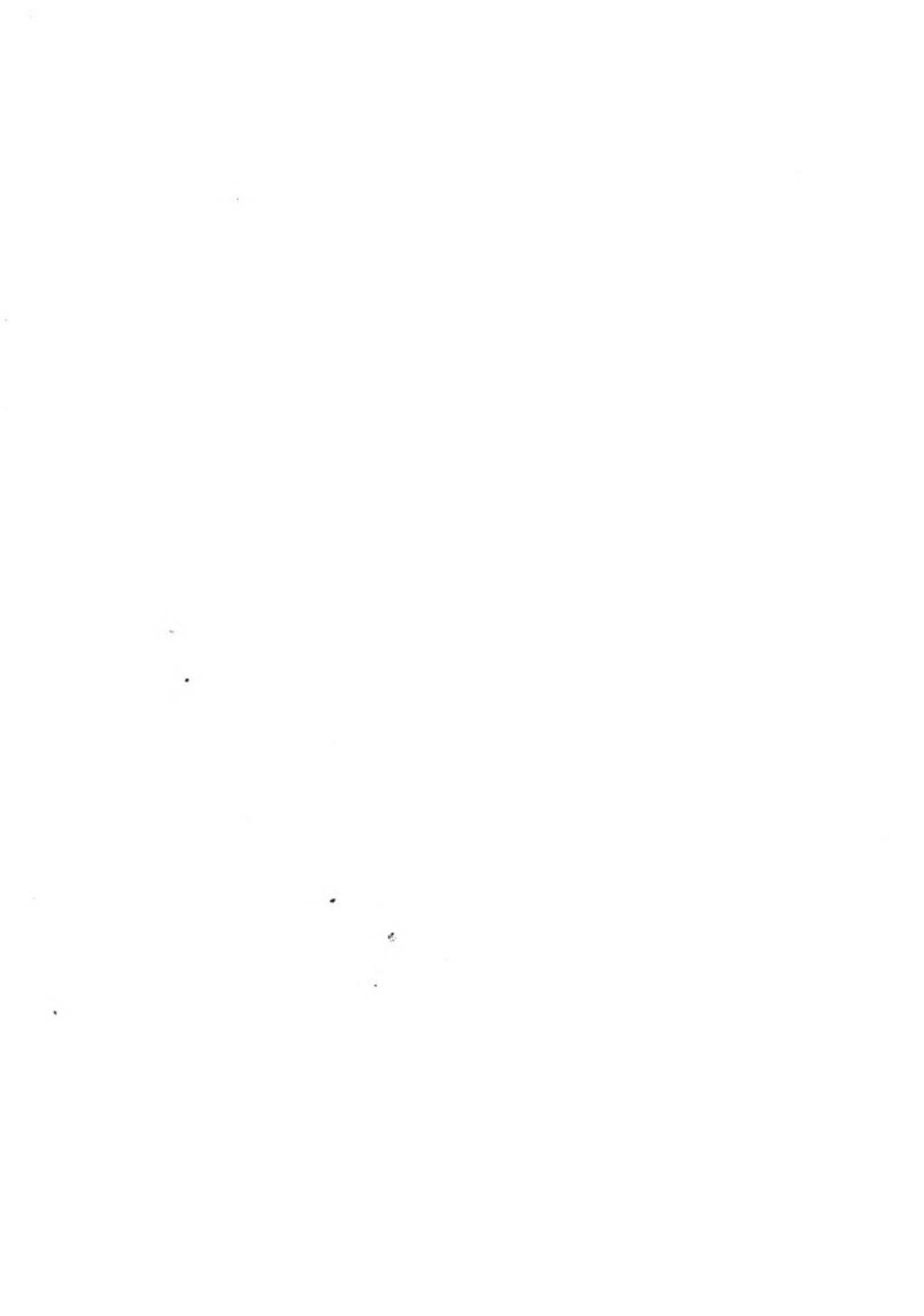
*And it haply then may chance
That the Lord will bend a glance
On my heart, and read it truly,
And say: "She hath done her best."*

AND IS NOT ITS BEST THE WHOLE
I HAVE ASKED OF ANY SOUL ?

*Rise, O spirit. Leave thy sheaves, then,
Enter thou into My Rest."*







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